

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
STAFF AND OFFENDER NEWSLETTER

THE TOOL BOX

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

APRIL 2014

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

The Family Engagement Sessions for 2014

The Family Engagement Sessions are now underway and we hope to have a successful year engaging families and loved ones with questions regarding the Department of Corrections. The current upcoming sessions are:

- April 8— In Maysville at A New Avenue
- April 15— In Paducah at the Kentucky Oaks Mall
- April 17— In Hopkinsville at the Christian County Library
- April 24— In Ashland at The Neighborhood
- April 29— In London at The Laurel County Corrections Center

All sessions start at 6 PM local time and last approximately 1—1 1/2 hours. For a full listing for the 2014 year and more detailed information see:

<http://corrections.ky.gov/reentry/Pages/FamilyEngagementSessions.aspx>



Need Information about the Affordable Care Act?

Contact:

KYNECT.KY.GOV

Call Center:

**1-855-4kynect
(855-459-6328)**

Insurance Agents and

**Kynectors:
1-855-326-4650**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 2014 SCHEDULE FOR FAMILY ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS | 1 |
| THINKING FOR A CHANGE GRADUATES | 2-3 |
| RE-ENTRY COUNCILS | 4 |
| BAN THE BOX INITIATIVE | 5 |

THINKING FOR A CHANGE—MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

JULY 2013

THINKING FOR A CHANGE GRADUATING CLASS



“I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to teach Thinking for a Change. The probation and parole office in the west end of Louisville KY is extremely excited to have graduated 6 participants from this cognitive behavioral therapy program on July 12th, 2013. In class, we targeted parolees’ and probationers’ criminogenic needs by addressing the way they think, with the notion that thinking controls behavior. The program met twice a week for three months and required full participation, role playing, and homework after every class. I was humbled by many of the life experiences that the participants shared with us and at the same time, flabbergasted by the thoughts they revealed which led them to their criminal actions.

At first, the men were not very receptive to the tools we as facilitators, tried to give them in order to reconstruct their negative thoughts. This made the classes extremely challenging.

Finally, we started to see the participants relax as we slowly attempted to break down their barriers and gain their trust. I truly believe that these 6 graduates, out of 12 that started the program, understand what they need to do to take control of their lives. They have proven that they are responsible and committed to change by completing the program; therefore, I am optimistic and excited for the future of these men.”

- **Hannah Gibson, Re-Entry Parole Officer**

“Someone once said, ‘Life is a marathon, not a sprint.’ That saying can both be applied to Thinking for a Change and our graduate’s lives. In the class, we showed that, like in a marathon, we have to pace ourselves. The class, having met twice a week for 3 months, allowed the time to really learn the new skills needed to succeed in life. To not rush into the marathon of life, without first training our minds on how to react and adapt to obstacles that can cause us to stumble, and at times fall. Thinking for a Change has taught the graduate’s that they can succeed despite these stumbles, and that in life, sometimes you have to take a detour to successfully complete the race. There are those that find the challenges to great to face, that stumble and “forget” the new skills they learned, that couldn’t finish the race. Thinking for a Change is an important program because each individual has to participate to succeed. Just as in a marathon, and life, participation and dedication are necessities to finish successfully. It is important to remember that, like in a marathon, life is an endurance test, with situations that will continue to arise. They will be tested and it is up to them to take control of their thinking, and therefore behavior. Thinking for a Change has provided the tools. Remember, in moments of weakness, to Stop and Think, to think of the Choices and Consequences, and that Thinking Controls Our Behavior.”

- **Amber Ulanowski, Probation & Parole Officer**



Thinking For A Change Facilitators

“While in college it is easy to be motivated about wanting to help others and our abilities to do so. However, once I got into the real world and settled into my position I began to question being capable of helping. Working in Probation and Parole you often see people resort to old habits and it can be very discouraging. Then I was given the opportunity to teach Thinking for A Change to a group of men all living in the west end of Louisville, Kentucky. Throughout this course my motivation to help, and confidence in people to change was completely restored. I feel so fortunate to have witnessed a genuine change in men who have been set in harmful behaviors for a majority of their lives. Facilitating this course gave me an insight into the lives of the people I work with that I would have never had otherwise. I move forward now with a better understanding of the obstacles a lot of offenders are facing and believe this will improve my ability to assist in overcoming them. Lastly, teaching gave me the chance to build really great relationships with Officer’s from other districts in Louisville. The women I taught with were amazing to work with and I am happy to have found new friends in all of them. I hope more Officer’s will take advantage of the chance to teach this class in the future, it is truly fulfilling to watch change in the participants. The six men who graduated our course have made me so proud to be apart of the experience.”

- Connie Roach, Re-Entry Parole Officer

These men have committed themselves for the past 3 months, twice a week to this program. I am ecstatic at how the class as a whole progressed. They more than deserve this award of achievement after intense role playing, weekly homework assignments and their willingness to share real life situations. At the beginning of the program I wanted to have weekly inspirational quotes. However one of the men came up with a quote that said it all and we never discussed another one. He said, quoted from music artist Jay Z, “Be careful who you’re talking to, because from a distance you don’t know who is who.” At first he had to explain this quote to me and I loved it and we shared it with the rest of the class. But now after our experiences together learning skills, problem solving, and controlled thinking, it means even more today.

No matter what the situation is we don’t know the whole story and may never know. Whether we are the one in the conflict or the bystander looking in we must recognize our own behaviors and consequences and the effect that they may have on those around us, especially those that love us. We, as facilitators, did not know what to expect when meeting the men for the first class and starting this program; as much as they did not know what to expect with us. You see, in the beginning we were at a distance but now we are more aware of who is who. Each of these men are dedicated, responsible, and committed graduates of Thinking for A Change Program. - **Sarah Newton, Probation & Parole Officer**

Get Involved! Join a Re-entry Council!

Reentry is the process of someone who has been incarcerated and returning to the community. They may have fulfilled their obligation (served all of their sentence) or they may be in the process of completing their sentence while on parole or probation. Reentry involves the use of programs targeted at promoting the effective reintegration of offenders back to communities upon release from prison and jail. Reentry programming, which often involves a comprehensive case management approach, is intended to assist offenders in acquiring the life skills needed to succeed in the community and become law-abiding citizens. A variety of programs are used to assist offenders in the reentry process, including prerelease programs, drug rehabilitation and vocational training, and work programs.

There are many factors any person has when you move from one area to another. Where would you live? Where would you work? Who would help you when you needed it? These are questions you would ask especially if you made the move very quickly with only what you could carry, and you had limited resources to rely on. Sometimes, the surroundings you came from was part of the problem in the first place. Where do you go if you want to stay straight? A reentry person needs support. Not a free ride, but support to get started on the track to being successful in the community. They need jobs to make money, to buy housing, to get transportation, to buy food, etc. When a person is able to work and buy those things, the urge to commit a crime to get money, is greatly reduced.

Some have addictions to drugs and alcohol, and support is needed to battle those cravings. Fighting an addiction is not easy and may last a lifetime, but with support it can be done. Taking away those addictions may prevent many violent crimes as well as economic crimes. Recidivism is when someone who has been in jail or prison, ends up returning to jail or prison due to criminal activity or violations of their parole or release. With proper support, it has been shown, the recidivism rate can be lowered greatly. While keeping people out of our prisons and jails is a good thing, it is also one of the greatest ways to save tax money and many other resources needed to keep a person in a cell. A productive citizen in the community working to support themselves is one of the goals we wish to achieve.

There are eleven (11) Councils across the state, find yours and join!

www.kentuckyreentry.org

“BAN THE BOX” INITIATIVE

From www.wave3.com:

LOUISVILLE, KY - Should people who have a criminal history have to pay for it for the rest of their lives? That was the argument in the controversial Ban the Box debate, concerning whether or not ex-offenders should be required to mark a box on a job application. Thursday night, the Louisville Metro Council voted unanimously to pass the ordinance that bans the box.

Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer had threatened to veto the measure, agreeing with some council Republicans that the move could hurt the city's business with vendors. But he and the council's GOP members eventually got on board with some exemptions. After a discussion that lasted nearly two hours, the vote took place and ended with cheers. Earlier in the day The Reverend Larry Sykes was among those rallying before the meeting to ban the box. Sykes, who helps ex-offenders get jobs, said, "We found that over 160,000 individuals alone in Louisville have a criminal record."

Sykes and other community leaders maintained, if you are honest and check a box that you've had a past run in with the law on a work application, there's a good chance you wouldn't ever make it to a job interview. But, there were plenty of objections to the ordinance, a measure that includes Metro Government and it's vendors. You can ask about criminal history after it's determined the applicant is qualified for the job. Despite talk over the issue for nearly a year, some Republicans argued recent changes lacked time and the information needed for a vote.

They also worried about costs to the city to police the ordinance and make sure that vendor and contractors are actually following the rules. Still in the end, it passed 26-0. The box would still be allowed if the job involves handling money, supervising children or dealing with confidential information. Mayor Fischer is expected to sign off on the bill.

www.secondchanceky.org

Do you have a felony?

Do you know someone with a felony?

Do you or someone you know need assistance with employment, housing, education, meals, and other sources to be successful?

Do you need a second chance?

www.secondchanceky.org is a website dedicated to helping people overcome obstacles in the pathway to success.

If you have any comments, questions, suggestions, articles, etc for the TOOLBOX, please email to: kerry.mears@ky.gov